

Animals & Men

The Journal of The Centre for Fortean Zoology



*The Nepalese Elephants-Expedition
Report; The Owlman of
Mawnan-new evidence;
Mystery Hominoids in Africa..*

Issue Six

Incorporating "The Crypto Chronicle" £1.75

CONTENTS AND CREDITS

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THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY ARE NOT DONE....0.

Dear Friends,

After another eventful three months here we are with another issue of 'Animals & Men'. 'Eventful' is not probably an adequate word! We ran a stall at the Fortean Times "Unconvention '95", where I met a lot of people that I had wanted to meet for a long time, (and managed to persuade quite a few of them to subscribe to/write for us. If you weren't there, and I have to admit to being a little surprised by the lack of familiar faces (or names on ID badges), then I strongly urge you to go next year. The word is that next year's event will be bigger and better and probably in a new venue.

Another event which promises to be a very exciting one, and incidentally another one at which you will be able to find a contingent from The Centre for Fortean Zoology plying our wares is Zoologica. It is organised by the zoologist and former zoo-keeper Clinton Keeling and has been described as being for Animals what the Chelsea Flower Show is for horticulture.

Also much deserving of our gratitude are my good friends Mike and Liz who put us up in their flat in South Norwood when we went to London for the FT Convention. Graham, the roadie, who threw caution to the wind and worked extremely hard all weekend despite a broken leg (itself broken under bizarre fortenean circumstances-but that is another story), to Tom Anderson who has, even by the standards of our regional representatives worked far beyond the call of duty, and once again to Steve Browning the DJ from the land of the Bunyip and the Thylacine, who once again gave me air time on his severely entertaining show for Gemini Radio in Exeter.

The small screen has also been beckoning your editor. Some of you may have seen me on The James Whale Show in May and readers in the Westcountry TV area may be interested to know that I have contributed six segments to a ten part TV series called 'Mysterious West'. The series is being shown from the 11th August and should, though I say it myself be well worth watching, if only for the sight of me hugging the lovely Ruth Langsford during a discussion about the Golden Frogs of Bovey Tracey.

Finally, subscribers will find a questionnaire with this issue. I would be very grateful if you could fill it in and send it back to us. A large chunk of our readership are true forteans and another chunk of our readership are zoologists, and yet more are something in between it will help us improve our service if we know what subjects particularly interest you and what subjects, if any leave you completely cold! Issue seven will be out in October but until then....

Best wishes



APOLOGY BY JAN KINGSHOTT

I refer to my previous article, entitled '*Witness reliability in Big Cat Sightings*'.

In this article I made reference to a Bodmin Police Officer and I claimed that he had declared himself a big cat expert. It has been brought to my attention that the officer concerned has himself never made such a declaration. I therefore wish to totally withdraw this remark. I further claimed that he frequently saw these animals and that they were described by him as black. I now also accept that he has only seen them four times and that he described them only as dark coloured.

I also wish to point out that the officer concerned is a long serving member of the police service and I have no reason whatsoever to doubt his integrity or credibility and I must point out that he has confined his study to his off-duty time.

I wish to make a total withdrawal of my comments relating to this mans involvement and to apologise for any embarrassment or distress caused by my article and the reference to him and his involvement. In the writing of this article I accept that I did not approach him personally but I relied on press and documentary reports shown on television. These were not totally accurate and I accept fully that I should have made further research.

No slur, offence or derogatory allegations were intended and if this was taken to be so, then I fully withdraw any such inference.

EDITORIAL APOLOGY

The Editor would like to add his own regrets for any embarrassment, either professional or personal caused to the officer concerned who is, as far as the editor is aware, above reproach.

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B. Goodwin, 6 Peter St., Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 7Q8.

Compiled by JAN WILLIAMS (of no fixed abode) with the occasional interruption from THE EDITOR (of no fixed hairstyle)

Hereford and Worcester

A cow belonging to farmer Norman Edwards of Pembridge, near Leominster, was found in the early hours of the morning with deep slashes on its rump. Local vet John Horlock said 'There is no doubt this animal was attacked by a big cat.' There were four clawmarks 18 inches long and about 1.5 inches apart on each side of the cow. A pawprint 4 inches wide and 5 inches long is being examined at London Zoo. (*Daily Mail* 2.5.95)

NEWSFILE

Oxfordshire

MYSTERY CATS

A large black cat, described as four times the size of a normal cat, was seen on the outskirts of Witney in the last week of May. The witness was out jogging at 5 am, and watched the animal for 10 minutes as it walked round a field. The report follows other recent sightings at Stonesfield, Charlbury, and Fawler. (*Oxford Times* 2.6.95)

Buckinghamshire

Exotic cats have joined the concrete cows of Milton Keynes. Amateur naturalist Andrew Walpole saw a brown 'jungle cat' at Shenley Church End on the western outskirts of the city in mid-May. A labrador-sized cat was seen last year 'skulking under a bush' in Conniburrow, close to the huge shopping complex of Central Milton Keynes, and another was reported chasing deer in Brickhill Woods, close to the Bedfordshire border.

Deep aggressive growls 'like a cat defending its territory' disturbed a peaceful April afternoon in Dunsmore on the edge of the Chiltern Hills. The growls alerted residents Rod and Val Hamer to the presence of an Alsatian-sized black cat in a tree amidst thick undergrowth near their garden. The animal climbed head-first down the tree as they watched, jumping the last few feet and stretching like a domestic cat after it landed.

Mr Hamer found a clump of underfur on the bark which he sent to the Natural History Museum. Museum staff are still trying to identify the fur, but say it is definitely not from a puma. Both black and sandy-coloured cats have been seen in the area in recent months. (*Bucks Herald* 27.4.95)

A cat-flap is on the cards at Chalfont St. Giles. Following a police search for a 'tiger' in the grounds of Bucks College Campus in the town, the Buckinghamshire Advertiser has set up a 'Beast Hotline' and is offering £100 reward for a photo of the Bucks Beast.

One hot-line sighting came from Leslie Hockman of nearby Chalfont St Peter who says the beast scratched bark off a tree in his garden at 1.40 am. 'Then it went to the toilet under my fir tree.'

Reports of the 'tiger' concern a ginger or orange coloured cat about 2 and a half feet tall which, according to the Advertiser, 'confirm police suspicions that the animal fits the description of a cheetah or a leopard'. Great - a definite identification at last! (*Buckinghamshire Advertiser* 31.5.95)

Yorkshire

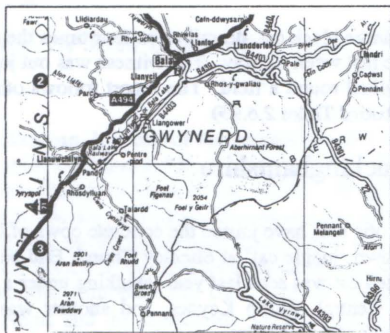
The death of a sheep on a common in York has been blamed on a big cat which was seen in the area several times last year. (*Northants Chronicle and Echo* 5.4.95)

LAKE MONSTERS Etc...

SOMETHING ELSE FROM LAKE BALA!

Two brothers from London encountered a strange creature during a fishing trip on Lake Bala, Gwynedd, in March. 'It was very calm and we were about to finish when we noticed something coming up to the surface about 80 yards from the boat. At first we thought it was a tree trunk. Then it straightened up and towered 10 feet in the air. It had a small head and a long neck, like pictures of the Loch Ness monster.'

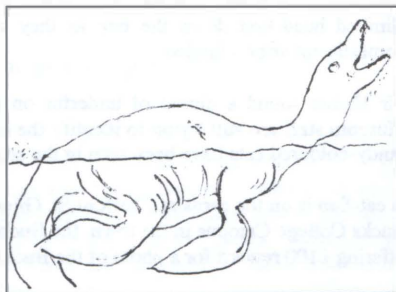
'Teggie' - from the Welsh name for the lake, 'Llyn Tegid' - has also been seen by local people, but they tend to keep quiet about it. In a sighting made 20 years ago, lake warden Dafydd Bowen described the creature as 'grey, about eight feet long, and looked like a crocodile with a small hump in the middle'. (*Sunday Telegraph* 26.3.95)



**NORTH WALES SHOWING
LAKE BALA**

GREETINGS FROM ASTBURY PARK...

A mysterious creature appeared at Astbury Mere Water Park, near Congleton, Cheshire, at the end of May. Park Director John Evans was alerted to the animal by a member of the public, who said he had seen a 'crocodile' enter the water. A sceptical Mr Evans went to the spot, and found some boys throwing stones at a lizard-like creature. The animal was lying on the lake bed, but was visible through the clear water. Mr Evans described it as 2'6 - 3 feet in length, greenish-brown in colour, with a long tail, feet and a lizard-like head. Park staff donned wet-suits and attempted to capture the animal, but it eluded them, and has not been seen since.



**'TEGGIE' (AFTER THE
SUNDAY TELEGRAPH).**

The Mere, a flooded gravel pit, has only been in existence

for about 15 years, and no rivers or streams flow into, or out of, it. It seems likely the creature is a pet which has been dumped in the park, possibly a caiman or monitor lizard. (Congleton Chronicle 2.6.95)

CENTENARIAN CROC CROAKS

Kolya, a crocodile kept in Russia for more than 110 years, died in Yekaterinburg in February, having survived two world wars, a revolution, and a civil war. His skeleton will go on display in the local museum. (Yekaterinburg is of course the town where the last Tsar and his family were kept prisoner prior to their execution and I am sure that there is a quasi-fortean piece of surreal synchronicity in there somewhere but I can't find it. Ed). (BBC Ceefax 16.2.95)

NEWS FROM NESS

The Weekly World news, an American 'tabloid' newspaper notorious for (and I have to be careful what I say this ish) their 'interesting' approach to the news recently claimed that the Loch Ness monster became beached on the shores of the lake and 'died in agony'. This provoked great protest from the Scottish Tourist Board and from the Aberdeen Press and Journal (undated I am afraid). The story was illustrated by quite a convincing picture of what appears to be a beached whale on which a seals head has been superimposed surrounded by refugees from a 1950's beach party movie.

Back in the real world..21 year old Strasbourg monster hunter Thierry Regall made sonar contact with what appears to be a 'classic' Nessie type object in Loch Dochfour, which is linked to Loch Ness. He claims that he was 'lead' to the spot where the contact was made after his friend and colleague Again, David Adler (also from Strasbourg), a 'keen astrologer and clairvoyant', used a pendulum and a map of the loch to find "Nessie's" exact whereabouts. I have no dates but the story comes from the Aberdeen Press and Journal.

OTHER STRANGE CREATURES

WOMBLING FREE

Police and park rangers equipped with tins of dog food and a football goal net, hunted and captured two wild boar reported by a woman walking her dogs on Wimbledon Common, South London. (The Times 24.11.95)

LOOSE MOOSE

A 400lb female moose was running wild in Montreal last July. Police failed to catch the animal, believed to be looking for a mate. Sergeant John Green said 'If they follow a scent, it's pretty hard for them to stop'. (BBC Ceefax Newsround 6.7.94)

THIS WEEK'S SPECIAL OFFER . . .

A four-foot-long iguana was found wandering round the Tesco car park at Quedgley, Gloucester, in April. Shoppers called in Ministry of Defence police (anyone else remember that TV series 'V'?), and the reptile was taken to a local wildlife rescue centre.

In Winlaton, Tyne and Wear, a torpid toad tumbled from a lettuce which had been in Joan Veitch's fridge for a week. Officials from English Nature identified it as a Natterjack toad, rare in Britain, and suggested it had been shipped in the lettuce from Spain or France. (*Daily Mail* 19.4.95, 29.5.95, *BBC Ceefax* 17.4.95)

RED AND YELLOW AND PINK AND GREEN . . .

Conservation groups and research bodies in Britain have been inundated with reports of frogs in a variety of unusual colours. White, cream, pink, yellow, peach, and red frogs have appeared. Naturalists agree that these are albino frogs, lacking black pigment, but are arguing as to whether there are more odd-coloured frogs than normal, and, if there are, what the reason is.

Mark Nicholson of the Cornwall Wildlife Trust (see Issues 1 and 4 for previous reports of the Trust's research), said he believes there is an increase, caused by warm weather which has allowed tadpoles lacking the black pigment normally necessary to absorb warmth to survive to adulthood. Clive Cummins of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, said there is no evidence to show that such frogs are becoming more common, but, if they are, it could be due to intense ultra-violet light disrupting their DNA, echoing press reports earlier this year which suggested that the cause was the ubiquitous hole in the ozone layer.

Is this just a British phenomenon? If so, the ozone layer theory seems unlikely, and the cause is either a localised one, or the result of research/publicity bringing more witnesses forward. Have any of our overseas readers heard of similar reports in their areas? (*Sunday Times* 4.6.95)

A&M reader Darren Naish from Hampshire reports that several yellow frogs have been seen in his garden in recent years and enclosed a photograph of what is undoubtedly the most canary yellow frog I have seen yet. Unfortunately the quality is not good enough to print satisfactorily. We are still looking for photographs and specimens (living or dead) of these strange amphibians. In issue one we showed that in the West Country at least there is a long folkloric tradition to suggest that these frogs are not a new phenomenon which in turn suggests that the hole in the ozone layer is not a direct cause! Darren Naish also describes other deformed and aberrant frogs from his neighbourhood. Again specimens and photographs are urgently required!

ZOO NEWS

Marwell Zoo have released two Przewalski's Horses on scrubland at the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency near Farnborough, Hampshire, as the first step towards re-introducing the species to Mongolia.

A pair of Sand Cats (subspecies *Felis margarita harrisoni*) at London Zoo have produced four kittens. London is one of only two European Zoos to keep Sand Cats, which are endangered throughout their range. Males of the species have the curious distinction of barking like a dog.

Woburn Safari Park celebrated its 25th Anniversary with the opening of Rainbow Landing - a walkthrough aviary where visitors can feed nectar to Rainbow Lorikeets which fly down to the hand. The Lorikeets (all captive bred) were trained by Berwick Productions - the company which trained 'The Birds' in the Hitchcock film! (*Daily Mail* 31.5.95, 10.6.95)

Six blonde hedgehogs born at the Secret World animal rescue centre, East Huntspill, Somerset, appear to be very rare chinchilla mutants, rather than albinos. Their spines are pale cream, but their eyes are dark blue, not pink. Staff member Debbie Muir said the parent hedgehogs (also blue eyed blondes) were both rescued from Wiltshire - the female two years ago, and the male this year. Secret World intend to release the four surviving hedgehogs on Alderney, in the Channel Islands, which is noted for its population of albino hedgehogs. They believe this will increase the brood's chance of survival, and hope one of the airlines will sponsor the hedgehogs' flight.

PLAGUE OF RATS

MAMMALS

A report from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health estimates the British rat population at 60 million, an increase of 39 per cent in 14 years. The Eastern Counties are worst affected, with rats infesting one in six homes. The report suggests that recent mild winters and wet summers have allowed more rats to survive. The Institute is calling for improved methods of control to be introduced and co-ordinated nationally. Spokesman Hilary King said 'Action is desperately needed'. The answer must be obvious to our readers - *Alligators in the Sewers!* (*Daily Mail* 7.6.95)

AQUATICSLOTH

The fossilised remains of a five million year old sloth like creature have been found on the Peruvian coast. It lived in the Pliocene and as the bones were found alongside the remains of fish and crocodiles it has been assumed that it lived at least a semi-aquatic existence. *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 18.5.95

DIRTY STINKIN' RAT...

Two Chinese soldiers have captured a two foot long, 8 lb rat with claws like a cat and a tail as thick as a man's thumb, reported the *Aberdeen Evening Express*, who got their story from the Xinhua news agency. It is not clear whether the creature which is reported to have had an eight inch tail and sharply protruding teeth belongs to any known species.

IRISH HARES

The Irish Government released 28 wild hares onto Bull Island in the estuary of the River Liffey in a bid to restore a population reduced to single figures by hunting. Such experiments often have interesting results.

For example it is generally believed that there is a small but viable population of the Mountain Hare living on the Lizard peninsula in Cornwall after the wrong species was reintroduced by sportsmen. *Aberdeen Press and Journal (undated).*

PAWS FOR THOUGHT

PRIMATES

Witch Doctors are believed to be responsible for cutting off the front paws of several baboons living in mountains above Cape Town in South Africa. 'It's highly likely their paws have been cut off for *muti (magic potions)*', said Ecologist Wally Petersen. *Aberdeen Press and Journal (Undated).*

SEXY APE

An ape of an unspecified species, enraged when a domestic servant fought off its sexual advances was pacified by being thrown a banana to eat, the Kuwaiti daily al-Watan newspaper reported. *Aberdeen Press and Journal (Undated).*

SPONGY FLESH EATERS

NEW SPECIES

A flesh eating sponge has been found in the depths of the ocean. French divers found it in a cave deep beneath the Mediterranean. The creature, known as *Asbestopluma*, uses its tentacles to grab its victims which are digested by a labyrinth of cells. The news report reassured us all that it does not seem to like the taste of humans. *Teletext ITV News 26.1.95*

DID WE MISS ONE?

No new species from Vietnam last issue - were the survey team on holiday? Now comes news of a black muntjac captured near the Vietnam/Laos border and being held in a Lao menagerie. DNA samples have been taken from the animal, which is smaller than the Giant Muntjac, and results are awaited, but it looks like this is number 7. I'm running out of fingers . . .

ENDANGERED SPECIES

FINALLY

Why is it, that whenever some poor, (often but not always either foolhardy or mentally ill) individual gets hurt by a captive carnivore it always seems to be by one of the rarest sub-species? When the schizophrenic at London Zoo was mauled it was by an Asiatic Lion which is almost extinct in the wild. The keeper at Howletts Zoo who was recently killed was killed by a severely endangered Siberian Tiger and in the last issue we mentioned a Sumatran farmer killed by a sub species of tiger which is practically extinct in the wild state. The Daily Express on the 4th May 1995 gave a graphic description of the wounds suffered by Carl Hogben who was stupid enough to climb into the cage of a pair of Persian Leopards, a race of *P.pardus* which is far from being the most common.

Newsfile Correspondents: Richard Muirhead, Tom Anderson, Sally Parsons, Dr Karl Shuker, C. Sumner, RAJ Williams.

Expedition Report: In search of the Nepalese Humped Elephants..

The first that most of us heard of the peculiar Elephants of Western Nepal was in Karl Shuker's 1993 book, 'The Lost Ark'. He printed pictures taken on an expedition lead by the semi legendary British explorer, Colonel John Blashford-Snell. Since leaving the Army Blashford-Snell has run the extraordinarily successful 'Discovery Expeditions' from his base in Dorset. He lead an expedition to Nepal during February and March 1992 where in the Bardia region in the west of the country he discovered a remote valley where the local people had reported seeing 'giant elephants'. Two such beasts, both adult bulls, named 'Raja Gaj' and 'Kuncha', were discovered and photographed. The shoulder heights were estimated as being eleven feet and three inches which is taller than the biggest specimen of the Asiatic Elephant ever recorded.

This however was not the most exciting feature of the two giant beasts because as Dr Shuker wrote:

"Each bore two very large domes on its forehead, and a distinctive nasal bridge-features not exhibited by normal Indian Elephants but which were characteristic of a primitive extinct elephant called the *Stegodon*".

Stegodons were not only the ancestors of the three surviving species of Elephant but also of the mammoth, a beast usually considered by all but the most hopeful cryptozoologists to have been extinct for at least five thousand years.

Earlier this year Blashford-Snell returned to Western Nepal with the help of five tame elephants, expert local naturalists and trackers, and a fourteen person team, to discover more about these colossal beasts. The team had just a week to track down the two elephants, who wander in an area of one thousand square kilometers of tropical, dry, deciduous forest and grassland. Eventually footprints of one of the Elephants, (who eventually turned out to be Raja Gaj), were found in a dry, sandy river bed, not far from the camp, but they were several days old, and large, though the elephants were, it was, in the words of the expedition's press officer, like 'looking for a needle in a haystack'.



Picture Copyright Discovery Expeditions

In March 1995 the expedition base near Shaftsbury in Dorset released a statement which included the following exciting news:

..."The two elephants were eventually sighted, resting in the shade of some trees near a village that they had been raiding for food. Raja Gaj had lost part of his right tusk and the team were able to get close enough to note that there were no lashes on his eyelids, compared to the long, thick matt of lashes on the Indian domestic elephants, nor was there hair on his tail"

The expedition is hoping that tests on the cells from the elephant's gut which are adhering to dung samples will indicate the genetic origin of two massive tankers. Hopefully we will soon know the precise relationship that these two beasts have both with each other and with the species of Asiatic Elephants as a whole.

The team carried out other zoological work, during their stay. They sighted several groups of elephants new to the area, some with very young calves, and began compiling a census of individuals which will allow future population growth and migrations to be monitored.

The descriptions of their adventures circulated upon their return to the United Kingdom are impressive and full of fun:

"The wild elephant roam freely in the area, and a few of the team members, investigating on foot in the forest, had to frighten off a large tusker who charged and stopped just ten feet in front of them. Pilkington image intensifiers were used to monitor their nocturnal movements and the night air was always full of elephant trumpeting matched by the calls of the expedition's elephants. Two wild young males plucked up courage one evening and paid the camp a visit to investigate the local talent, but the 'domestic' ladies who were approached failed to fall for their charms".

The expedition was also lucky enough to photograph a small school of the virtually extinct Gangetic Dolphin. These mammals whose natural habitat is the warm waters of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Indus rivers breed in the gorges on the upper reaches of the Karnali. Due to damming of the river, however, they are now trapped, unable to get down to the warmer waters and it is feared that they may die out completely. Although the species was named as long ago as 1801, it is relatively little known. The following description is taken from *The Encyclopedia of Sea Mammals* by D.J.Coffey (Rainbird, London 1977).

"The dark grey or dark brown body shades to a pale grey or pale brown belly. The animal grows to a maximum of 2.4 metres and weighs well over 45 kg. The beak is long and well defined. The flippers are very large, spade like appendages. It has a wide, notched fluke and two ridges running along the back, and one from the anus to the tail to assist stability. The eyes are extremely small and said to be structurally degenerate causing the animal to be blind. The large, rather elongated cervical vertebrae allow flexibility and the neck can be differentiated externally".



Picture Copyright Discovery Expeditions

The animals, live off fish, freshwater crustacea and other invertebrates, possibly sifting through the mud with their beaks in order to find them. They are hunted sporadically by the local tribes for food, but are seldom filmed or photographed. After many other adventures, with dung samples safely on board the team returned to Britain and the cryptozoological world, i.e., as I am writing, waiting with moderately baited breath to discover whether these are merely the two largest elephants in Asia or whether they are in fact a surviving pair of Stegodonts.

Big Cats in the Garden of England.

by
Neil Arnold

Exmoor, Surrey, Bodmin. Famous not just for the beauty of their countrysides. Each of these places is the unlikely habitat for various species of big cat. Now, we can add Canterbury, Deal and the surrounding areas to this list, for by the end of 1994 the big cat reports from locals and farmers were mounting up. Black creatures bigger than any feral dog were seen, together with smaller grey cats.

Unconvinced town folk were proven wrong when a number of sheep were slaughtered in the fields of Wingham, Easry and Dunkirk. The sheep were victims of a clean kill with puncture marks to the throat but not a bone broken. The skin was stripped and licked clean.

Pad marks were found and local investigators tracked the cats. A family were traced to Woodnesborough, Deal and photographs were taken. The pictures are not too clear, however, and although experts have claimed that the picture showed a big cat I am not convinced. This, however does not rid me of my belief that large predators are roaming East Kent. Maybe if the creatures are left alone in the wild and protected they may become as famous as the beasts of Bodmin and Exmoor. It does seem as though the big cat situation is now being taken more seriously and there are even those who wish to capture them.

The obvious theory about the origins of the Kentish big cat phenomenon is that they are escapees from Howletts Zoo in Canterbury. Thorough checks on the captive creatures have shown that none have escaped. The cats, could, of course have come from much further afield. They can travel miles in a single night and so they haven't necessarily escaped from nearby zoos or private collections. There are, however, those who believe that more than fifty years ago a wealthy family had their own collection of big cats. The family came from the Ashford area, and the big cats may either have escaped or may have been released due to the families inability to keep them due to their size. This is the case with many big cats kept as pets. This also applies to other animals which have been released by people unwilling or unable to pay for a license.

There have been over thirty sightings of the East Kent creatures and the paw prints suggest that there is more than one 'panther'. Whilst they continue to maul flocks of sheep one woman claims that a large black cat snatched her dog for its supper! The ridiculous thing is that after this savage incident, local newspapers and 'experts' are still offering rewards to anyone who can prove the existence of the 'beast'. Others give advice about what to do if confronted by a 'panther'. Glamourising such a situation may end in fatal consequences for anyone who feels clever enough to track and disturb the animal.

A few sightings of big cats have been notched up in the Deal and Dover area. The sightings have mounted up over the last few months whilst the sightings elsewhere are scattered. The more recent sightings have occurred in the Canterbury region. It appears that the mystery predators may be living in the Deal area but venturing elsewhere at night. It seems unlikely that all the creatures spotted could have been escapees from private collections and it also seems unlikely that animals that may have escaped from zoos in the past are still running wild! The last big cat to escape from Howletts Zoo was tracked after a few months. There is, however always a chance that people are deliberately releasing these animals from private collections.

The Sightings.

A large black cat was sighted in Wingham by a man walking his dog. It was night-time but the witness had a powerful torch and within the beam he saw a large, black, cat that bounded off. The man's dog apparently ran after the mystery animal which is unusual because many reports tell of dogs which are stricken with fear.

A Wingham farmer also spotted a black cat which was much larger than a dog. He was positive of his sighting and noticed the very long, sleek, tail. This sighting took place in the morning.

Sightings stretched as far as Faversham when a fisherman spotted a large, black cat near a lake. Another reliable report from the same area was of a large black cat seen by three people.

These reports were made to newspapers and to so called experts who seem to see it their duty to frighten the locals rather than inform them. Claims that the animals will strike if you run from them cannot be good for the area.

It seems obvious that these creatures are breeding and that the population can only increase. Mentions of hybrid cats are common and this could explain the different descriptions made by people who have caught a glimpse of the animals. It certainly appears as though the creatures are spreading and that there may come a time when we have to accept them as part of our wildlife.

A few years ago, on the Isle of Sheppey, a black cat was seen. This proves that the recent spate of sightings are not new for the area. A number of large cats have been spotted over the years and many were not reported. This is the case with many strange sightings. If large cats ARE being seen in Edinburgh, Devon, Derbyshire, Norfolk, The Isle of Wight, and even Australia, then why not Kent? There is enough countryside for these creatures to make their home. We can no longer doubt the presence of such creatures in our own back yards. There are enough eye witness sightings with which we can confront the sceptics. Maybe there will be some clearer photographs of the elusive creatures-the one taken by Dave Riches, who has been tracking the animals, is very unclear!

My conclusion and final theory is that whereas some of the cats may have been released from collections in the area, some may have come from far away. There may be no way of telling where they have come from but they should be left alone. We can't track down every individual, for there appear to be far too many, and with all the potential interbreeding there may be a lot of new and very interesting animals. Of course, people are going to claim their rights to walk through the meadows and fields of the Kent countryside, but its fair to warn them to 'watch your step'. The last time someone allegedly tried to track such a 'panther', they had their rib cage scratched. These cats are not human flesh eaters. They are as frightened of us as we are of them. It may be hard for some people to get used to the idea of big cats roaming the area but they are going to have to get used to it! Nature is for man AND beast.

No-one in the Deal and Canterbury areas has yet mentioned the possibility that the cats are spiritual entities like the Celtic Black Dogs, Mothman and other weird apparitions associated with Devon and Cornwall. To many this may seem a crazy theory, but although these cats appear as physical creatures which can apparently kill sheep, one should always keep an open mind in a case such as this, and the case is not yet closed. The mystery thickens!

THE DOCTOR AND THE OWLMAN

by Jonathan Downes

The Owlman of Mawnan is possibly the strangest zooform manifestation to have been reported from the British Isles. The sightings of an entity described variously as a feathered 'bird man', and a giant owl, took place between 1976 and 1978, and have confounded fortune researchers ever since. In conversation with Graham McEwan the legendary fortune Tony 'Doc' Shiels, admitted to being baffled by the whole episode, and even wondered whether the sightings had been all a hoax⁽¹⁾. 'Doc' Shiels is, himself, one of the biggest imponderables in the entire matter. Unfortunately, despite his exalted position as *'Surrealchemist in Residence'* to *'Animals & Men'*, his self admitted claims to being a cheat, a thimble-rigger, a charlatan and a mountebank⁽²⁾, cast some doubts on his veracity as a provider of source material.

Mark Chorvinsky, the Editor of the excellent *'Strange'* magazine devoted much of issue eight to part one of an in depth investigation of "Doc's" contribution to the canon of cryptozoological evidence. The articles casts great doubt upon the veracity of the 'Mary F' photographs of the Falmouth Bay Sea Serpent. The inference was that the rest of the series would ask similar questions about the validity of "Doc's" Loch Ness and Irish Lake Monster photographs, but for various reasons they were not published. "Doc" wrote to me in October 1994⁽³⁾ but was typically oblique when I questioned him about the *'Strange'* Magazine feature and essentially said nothing at all with a deep chuckle.

I think that when Mark Chorvinsky, who I have never met, described "Doc" as a *'magical wolf amongst fortune sheep'*⁽⁴⁾, he was not far from the truth. After all on a record we have just made "Doc" admits: *'I don't believe in the Loch Ness Monster even though I've seen the shagger and photographed it...'*⁽⁵⁾ In his October letter⁽⁶⁾ "Doc" told me to always remember that his attitudes *"(in connection with almost anything) are strictly surrealmchemical"*, and I sincerely believe that it is this bizarre mixture of art and science, of performance and invocation which provides the key to "Doc" and his work as a whole. "Doc" admits that his evidence is prejudiced, but as he says it is no more prejudiced than any other monster hunters⁽⁷⁾.

A great deal of *'Monstrum'* concerns "Doc's" relationship with a young Scottish Witch called Psyche. In an earlier book⁽⁸⁾, "Doc" suggested how easy it would be to 'invent' a witch called *'Psyche'*, and to launch her as a media star within the worlds of fortune and stage magic:

"I think that I mentioned that Psyche was a Scots lassie so she would have a certain rapport with Nessie of Loch Ness. There would be great publicity value in Psyche offering to visit the Loch and trying to 'call up' the monster from the deep. She could claim to have done it successfully on a previous occasion...when no spectators were around...and even to have a photograph as 'proof' of this. A Photograph? Gosh!!!"

Sounds familiar?

Mark Chorvinsky and others⁽⁸⁾ suggest that the 'Mary F' photographs, and the 'Patrick Kelly' photograph of the 'Lough Leane Monster' may have been faked by Shiels using a plasticene model affixed to a plane of glass. They may well have been, but equally they may well have not. Luckily, for believers in the Falmouth Bay beastie, there are witnesses who cannot, as far as I am aware be traced back to Shiels. It has

been suggested, however that every single 'Owlman' report can be directly linked in with the man that has been described as 'The Wizard of the Western World'⁽⁹⁾.

That is until now! We have recently obtained what is, as far as I am aware, the only post 1978 sighting ever to have been published, and also the first sighting by a male witness. Most importantly, however it is the first sighting which cannot be traced back to "Doc" Shiels. This provides unexpected and very valuable corroboration to the Shiels collected Owlman stories, to Shiels himself and by inference to his work with other zooform phenomena such as Morgawr. In the ongoing battle between the rationalists and the surrealists I strongly suspect that it is the surrealists who will have the last laugh!

I have interviewed the witness and I feel certain that he is genuine. In the testimony which follows I have not identified him. I guaranteed him anonymity because this was the only way in which he would allow us to use his testimony.

We also have two unpublished drawings of the owlman phenomenon and coincidentally my postbag recently contained an article by the good doctor about owlman which we commissioned from him a year or so ago, and which was accompanied by a photograph and a note, asking us whether a serious magazine dealing with Cryptozoology printed pictures of naked witches. We don't as a rule, but in this case...why not? we thought.

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MY SIGHTING OF OWLMAN BY 'GAVIN'.

(We were given 'Gavin's' address and details by a fellow cryptozoological researcher who had been in contact with 'Gavin' about something completely unrelated to feathered humanoids. Gavin had told him in passing that an ex-girlfriend of his had seen 'something' in the region of Mawnan Smith in Cornwall, and as we are presently researching material for a TV series could 'Mysterious West' we contacted him. We had a long conversation about his girlfriend's experience and three days later we received a letter from him. This article consists of excerpts from this letter.)

You asked if I had seen the creature. Thrown off guard, confused and suddenly alarmed, I had to reply 'No'. Well that was the lie - I DID SEE IT, as did my girlfriend at the time, Sally. (S from now on). Referring the whole experience onto S's shoulders was a route I took some time ago, and I hope that you will understand why. Mawnan owlman is a ridiculous thing that only a bizarre attention-seeker will even pretend to have seen. I am ANGRY that I have seen this creature. The whole thing is so stupid. But because I have seen this - AND I KNOW WHAT I SAW I am prepared to discuss the event intelligently.

I am anxious not to be identified, and the idea that what I say might be on TV scares the heck out of me! I will return to this issue later, but here are the details of, and the story behind, the sighting!

I have it written down in an old diary, and thus don't need to recall the sighting. I never recorded S's version of events - do bare in mind that we were standing next to one another at the time of the sighting - but my intention was to relay the details as if it were her account. Maybe that way things didn't seem so personal. Though the sighting, particularly the details of the creature, are recorded quite well, things are not so for the exact location, time etc. So that is from memory.

Well, the event occurred late in the 1980's, probably in '88 or '89. It was on a ?camping (sic) to Mawnan, or thereabouts. I cannot remember the site or anything else helpful. I believe the area was near the sea, but can't be sure. S and I went for walks early in the evening, returning not long after it was completely dark. This was probably in June or July, so that would be fairly late. I remember small lanes and paths, a large church and lots of big trees. We had a torch and I was shining its beam across trunks about fifteen feet off the ground. I am fairly sure that the animal was standing in a large conifer tree and the illustration we made after the sighting (but not till we got home actually) does depict the animal in a conifer tree, but I'm not that sure now. Here is the actual sighting as written down in my diary:

"Every couple of hours we would walk along the fringe of the wood. This was the third time that evening and it was beginning to get dark. From a distance trees looked black but closer up the branches and trunks could be seen. We saw the animal at about 9.30 P.M. It was standing on a thick branch with its wings sort of held up at the arms. I'd say that it was about five feet tall (but please read on). The legs had high ankles and the feet were large and black with two huge 'toes' on the visible side. The creature was grey with brown and the eyes definitely glowed. On seeing us its head jerked down and forwards, its wings lifted and it just jumped backwards. As it did its legs folded up. We ran away"

As you can see from the illustration we had a pretty good idea what it looked like. We didn't know what to do about it, and essentially vowed never to tell anyone. I last saw S about two years ago and talked about it then. She was as unkeen to share the information then as she was earlier, and I promised I wouldn't tell anyone about her involvement, but I could 'do what I liked' with my interpretation. I respect this and have never disclosed any information about her.

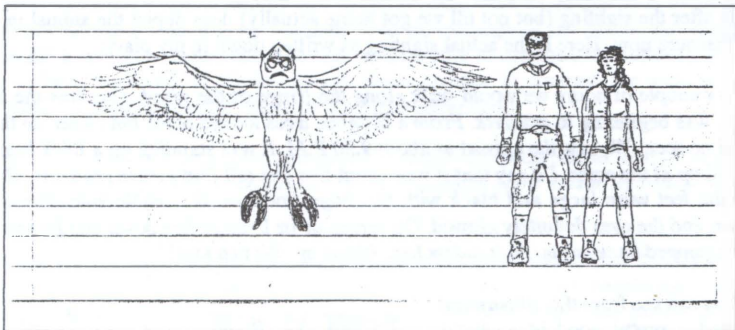
Seeing this creature really changed my life. It not only formed a 'springboard' for a personal interest in paranormal creatures, it also opened a different way of looking at the world. S seemed to have forgotten the whole thing, and it certainly didn't make things any different for



I've read all the available literature on this, or similar creatures. Shortly after the event - I emphasise AFTER - I was fortunate enough to chance upon Bord and Bord's '*Alien Animals*'. Here was, of course, it all again. I remember reading their chapter '*Giant Birds and Birdmen*' at least six times successively. The thing that struck me, and still does, were that all the witnesses were, (as far as I know) teenage girls. At the time of the sighting, S (and I) were between 12 and 13 years of age.

What is Owlman? I think that it's like a ghost, and no way is it a real animal. More to do with the human mind than the world of zoology. Several years ago I began having 'nasty' dreams featuring similar creatures - they were always malevolent but not generally harmful. There's dreams for you. I particularly remember one when I had to hunt and kill a man with a bow and arrow and I was being watched by a BLACK and WHITE owlman standing at the base of a birch tree. I tried drawing owlman again after this, and, as I was obviously better at drawing animals than previously, was much happier with the result. I enclose a photocopy of this latter interpretation which has caused me to change some of my ideas about the original sighting.

Firstly I don't think that it was as big as I (and S) originally described: closer to 4 feet than 5. As can be seen from the newer drawing, I found satisfaction in different configurations of the legs and thorax. S and I had agreed early on that the creature had 'bird legs', but



we never could agree on the feet. I am sure that they were like black pincers, or what your hands look like if you keep digits two and three pressed together and separate from four and five (which are also pressed together). S, though, said that she didn't see separate 'digits' and the feet were like clogs or bulky shoes of some kind. I remember reading in another Bord and Bord book, probably '*Ancient Mysteries of Britain*', that owlman was probably just an owl after all. Even at the time of the sighting I was extremely familiar with owls, (and other birds) and had even seen several in the wild. This creature was DEFINITELY a great deal bigger than any owl (even the biggest owls in the world - the Eurasian eagle Owls - do not approach four feet in height), and, as we were sure we knew what the head looked like, it didn't really resemble an owl except superficially.

I do not mind this information being used in any way, just as long as it is not explicitly linked to myself. I hope to eventually become involved in some branch of science, and having a name tarnished by an event such as this really would not be a helpful thing. My family would also be against me, as I have already had enough trouble from my involvement with things cryptozoological/paranormal. Therefore, as I am sure you understand, I would like anonymity and complete confidentiality as regards the personal aspects of this letter. A Pseudonym, quite unlike my real name, would therefore be most appropriate. I thank you for your understanding and cooperation, and hereby give you full permission to use the relevant material, obviously with the above conditions.

THE CASE.... FOR OWLPERSON

by Tony 'Doc' Shiels

In 1927, at the Manoir d'Anjo, Verengeville-sur-Mer, Andre Breton hunted owls and wrote *Nadja*. Around this time, Max Ernst made a series of surreal 'Bird Monuments'; and Salvador Dali sent a letter (to Lorca) in which he confessed that he was 'painting a very beautiful woman, smiling, tickled by multi-coloured feathers.

A bizarre loploplot was being hatched.

Breton, (obsessed by eyes) should not have been shooting the hooting owls. Look what happened to John Fane Dingle - after he 'shot a crop-eared owl' - in the Richard Hughes poem:

*"Corpse Eyes are eerie,
Tiger eyes fierce.
John Fane Dingle found
Owl-eyes worse".*

Ending

*"Owl-eyes, without sound
- pale of hue
John died of no complaint
with owl-eyes too".*

In 1933, the Loch Ness Monster and King Kong became world famous; and Max Ernst created his superb collage 'novel' - *Une semaine de Bonte* - full of monstrous hybrids, including birdmen and bird women, in a variety of dramatic/erotic situations. Also in 1933, Andre Breton met the surrealist seer, Victor Brauner, for the first time. Like Breton, Brauner was obsessed with eyes.

Loplop, 'Bird Superior', cock-a-doodled magical sigils on eggshells. Peculiar pit-patted onto Parson's Beach, Cornwall. Deep in the Helford something stirred.

In 1937, Max Ernst visited Cornwall with Leonora Carrington. They conjured cryptozoological curiosities. Sky clad surrealist witches were involved. Morgawr the sea-serpent was seen, H.P. Lovecraft died. Fern-Owls chirred in the Mawnan woods.

When whippoorwills call and evening is nigh...

In 1976, Max Ernst died, and a 'big feathered bird-man' was seen hovering over Mawnan Old Church. Dover publications produced an edition of 'Une Semaine de Bonte'. I licked an ice-cream cone, performed prestidigitations with pears, and met some young girls who had seen the strange Owlman of Mawnan.

Owlman has been described as being 'big as a man with a nasty owlface, big ears and big red eyes'. It had wings, grey feathers, and feet 'like big black crab claws'. Owlman could rise straight up vertically with hardly any movement of the wings. It was only ever seen by young females so far as I know.

For ten years, from 1976 to 1986, in cahoots with a group of witches, I attempted to invoke the Owlman employing the techniques of Shamanic surrealchemy. From time to time the conjurations may have worked. Some very strange things certainly happened during that period. I am sure that Max Ernst/Loplop had something to do with these happenings. My Owlman experiments ceased around Halloween 1986, when tricking and treating at Mawnan Old Church upset the ecclesiastical authorities. It was a hoot.

In 1994, something which is now known as 'The Case' captured my attention. Shortly after Paddy's day I flew from Shannon and soon found myself in London where the game was afoot and strix trix were in the city air. Somehow, it started with a crossword clue, a bag of pears, a Picasso exhibition, and the initials G.S. - which could represent 'Great Strigiform'. The pears proliferated and bottles of perry soon appeared. A vaguely Fortean person asked me if Owlman was really male; was it a cock or a hen? I recalled a dream, involving Max Ernst in which I had decided that Owlman was not a cock. But then, cocks popped up everywhere, along with more pears, perry and ice cream cones. One of the young girls who saw Owlman in 1976 was called Barbara Perry. The winged thing was also encountered by the Greenwood Sisters (G.S). I thought about Hen's Teeth and Mr Punch. They were already part of The Case.

I am writing this paragraph in Ireland, on Monday morning, May 1st 1995; after an exhausting 'Eve of Bealtaine' night of conjurations and libations. Owl-eyed Dingle from the poem came to mind at some point in the proceedings. This, in turn, made me think of Dingle, Co Kerry, and the famous Giant Squid (G.S), driven ashore there in 1673. Today, one of my daughters who lives quite close to Dingle, telephoned me to announce the news that another Kerry Kraken had been netted. Something 'owl-eyed' could have invoked it.

Tony "Doc" Shiels, Corofin, 1995.



PACKED SABRES

by Eric Sorensen

There seems to be a general consensus of opinion that Sabre-toothed cats preyed on the big plant-eaters, and that they were perhaps the only carnivores who had the ability to bring down the really big carnivores. They would thus have had the monopoly on this source of meat. But How? The usual comment on the big species of Sabretooth focuses on the weaponry or 'firepower', of the individual specimen with a few comments on stabbing technique. I think that these speculations must be close to the point, by necessity, but I object to the standard illustrations which depict a lone specimen, indirectly implying, by correlation to other cats, that it had solitary habits.

IF they preyed on megaherbivores, then a couple of tons of meat for one or two sabretooths would be wasteful over-kill, severely limiting the possible number because so much meat would be lost. One or two hunters would be at much greater risk of injury. The logical solution is pack hunting, like lions or wolves minimising risk and optimising prey size to feed an entire pack for a few days. We must therefore visualize a fearsome pack of sabretooths circling and stabbing an enormous victim like an elephant.

Social behaviour can explain the fact that we have found skulls with broken canines, with the broken end worn, revealing survival that would probably have been difficult outside a pack. One might theorise that this particular individual killed smaller prey, but the Smilodon, at least, was not built for speed.

Some people have argued that because Smilodon heavily outnumbers the Californian Lion at the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles, it must have been the smaller brain size or 'primitiveness' that caused them to fall in. Wolves, however, animals which we consider to be very intelligent, are equally well represented. We could simply argue that this is a sign of success, because the two species were simply so numerous.

Survivor chauvinism is a dangerous tar trap to fall into, but it has been taught for a hundred years. 'This one survived therefore it is more advanced' is just a circular statement. As long as we do not know what killed a lot of powerful, healthy animals, caution is recommended. Survival could just as well be regarded as luck.

After all the geological periods are defined by sudden global change, extinction and collapse of ecosystems. Catastrophism is on the way back!

I have seen sabretooth skeletons in Paris and Los Angeles. What struck me in L.A. was the fact that Smilodon, mounted along side the Californian Lion,

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Drawing by the author

is smaller, roughly 150-200 kilos compared to the lion which is really big at, perhaps, 300 kilos. At a distance I thought that it was a bear! The shoulder blade of the Smilodon was about half the area of that of the lion, so the powerful forelimb, that we see amongst lions and tigers can not have been a weapon of Smilodon. It was so successful and numerous, however, that I think that it was the ultimate killing machine...but not the biggest. The few thousand years which separates them from us, is nothing compared to their total existence of many millions of years with other carnivores, and they must have been known and feared by man. The fact that they survive as a Cryptozoological phenomenon is testimony to this, and whenever we deal with animals which are supposed to be extinct, but which remain in the memory, we must remember that the preservation of a specimen is a very rare event, and that the last fossil or sub-fossil is only the most recent known to science, and probably never the last that ever existed. Sadly, yet tantalizingly, therefore some of our cryptozoological subjects may have only left us within the last few hundred years, and perhaps even as recently as last year!

NOW That's WHAT I CALL CRYPTO!

Crypto-rock is a rare and strange beast. Encounters with the great crypto cuts are about as common as midnight meetings with the Thorganby Lion. But, if you plan your expedition with care, know what you're looking for and display patience then you might find the cuts that make up the legendary 'Now that's what I call Crypto' album.

Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers - Abominable Snowman in the Market.

Richman displayed an underground attitude to rival the Velvet Underground until a mental backflip in the mid seventies put him into career reverse with a propensity for infantile lyrics and scratchy acoustic guitar. The man is a born cult hero and as befits his role this cut is one of several in the Richman portfolio dealing with cryptozoology and UFO's. Lyrically it concerns the appearance of an 'Abominable Snowman' in a supermarket. This leads to several complaints from housewives before Richman concludes that basic mediation will solve this situation... 'Now, we've got to talk to this Abominable Snowman...Man!' Musically its basic fifties rock and roll, twenty years late, with plenty of treble on the guitars. Somewhere between light doo wop and Buddy Holly on mind expanding drugs.

The track is on the 'Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers' album. The original Beserkeley records release turns up occasionally in record fairs. Rev Ola should have a few copies of their CD release available. It was also compiled onto '23 great recordings by Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers' which has recently surfaced for the knock down price of £5.99 on CD.

EDITORIAL NOTE: "Uh Road Runner once, Roadrunner Twice, I'm
in Love with the feeling now"....

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THE MYSTERIOUS HOMINIDS OF AFRICA

in the light of Modern Research.

by Francois de Sarre

The survival of various-sized hairy hominids in the large, scarcely explored African forests may not be particularly surprising, since fossil records, in Ethiopia and elsewhere, are pointing out that the black continent was once inhabited by a series of human like creatures, and new species of large mammals, like the Okapi, the Mountain Gorilla and the Giant Forest Pig, have recently been discovered in Africa by Zoologists.

The aim of the present article is not to list the hitherto still unrecognized hominids of Africa as they are known from the numerous eyewitness reports throughout the whole continent: The interested reader may refer to Bernard HEUVELMANS' book '*Les Bêtes humaines d'Afrique*' (which has still not been translated into English). I intend, in this paper, to present the newest discoveries on fossil australopithecines, and to link them with the sightings of hidden hominids in Africa for classification purposes.

APE OR HUMAN?

In Aramis, Ethiopia, the recent discovery of the fossil of a creature that appears to be closely related to a chimpanzee, re-opened the old controversy about man's origins. (*Nature*, 371, 1994). Australopithecus ramidus, as it was called by Tim WHITE, dated from about 4.5 million years ago. Some authors would have given it the generic name of Pan, but in contrast to Chimpanzees the fossil skull presented a disposition characteristic of bipedality. The occipital hole (foramen magnum) where the spinal column enters the skull, was next to the base of the skull. In apes the hole is further back which leads us to suppose that ramidus walked erect.

The teeth of ramidus were covered with thin enamel, like those of Chimpanzees, demonstrating fructivorous habits, but the small canines look very human like! The articulation of the elbow suggests that ramidus could easily climb up, around, and through branches. The fossils of Australopithecus ramidus are

accompanied by fossils of fauna indicative of a forest environment. Many authors now suggest that the bipedal, upright, stance is an ancestral feature that has been lost by the apes....

Henry GEE, assistant editor of *Nature*, also emphasizes: '*Erect posture will thus be seen as a primitive feature that the Chimpanzees have lost, rather than an advanced feature that the hominids have acquired*'. In this way, *Australopithecus ramidus* represents a kind of '*missing link*' between an early terrestrial biped and the quadrupedal chimpanzees of today. The theory of Initial Bipedalism, indeed, already claimed that the different types of fossil hominoids and the various monkeys and apes are vestiges of man's ancestral line rather than his predecessors! (de SARRE 1994). This theory is now sustained by palaeontological data. The discovery of the new fossil provides powerful support for this interpretation, but there are other facts which confirm this point of view.

WAS 'HOMO' HABILIS A QUADRUPED?

Skulls of *Australopithecus africanus*, '*Homo*' *habilis* and *Homo erectus*, were examined with the help of the modern technology of Computer Tomography Scanning. The morphology of the osseous ear labyrinth gives us information on the locomotory behaviour. The only species able to demonstrate 'modern' human morphology, and thus to have the ability of bipedal gait is *Homo erectus*. In contrast, the semi circular canals in the skulls of *Australopithecus* resemble those of the extant great apes!

A. africanus thus presents a locomotor repertoire combining facultative bipedalism as well as arboreal climbing. In one specimen assigned to '*Homo*' *habilis* the canal dimensions show similarity with the canal proportions in large cercopithecoids.

The authors Fred SPOOR and Bernard WOOD suggest that the specimen of *habilis* that they examined (Stw 53) relied less on bipedal behaviour than the common australopithecines! '*Homo*' *habilis* may well be a combination of several quite different creatures. The australopithecines were apes. They only retained a relictual bipedality, just like today's chimps! If *Homo erectus* was indeed an obligatory biped, the other hominoids of Africa which are known only from fossils, usually had quadrupedal habits. To some observers they appear to be apes rather than hairy humans.

DWARFS OR LITTLE FURRY MEN?

Surely Africa still harbours unknown hominoids. That is, hominoids, presently undescribed by the zoologist. Many such 'cryptids' are described as 'small men', like the Agogwe of Tanganyika reported by William HICHENS in 1937. Others are naked or have a scarce pilosity. They often have a splendid mane, or at least long hair. They have a bipedal gait and are about three feet tall. As Bernard HEUVELMANS has explained, the African pygmies have downy hairs upon their bodies. Maybe smaller and hairier pygmies exist in remote parts of the deep forest?

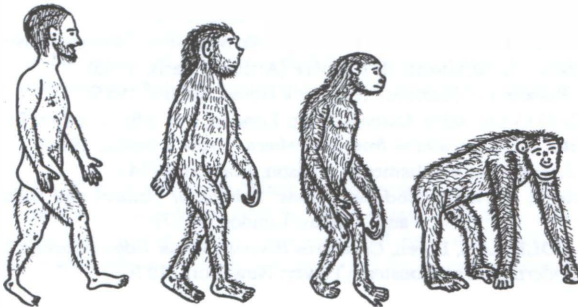
In several of the neighbouring countries, where they only survive in people's memories legends continue to surface about these small men. In other countries such as Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), they are widely mythicised and considered as goblins or other spirits. My personal opinion is that Africa's little furry men, including those resembling 'Australopithecines', are in fact 'Infra-Pygmies'; tiny human creatures who live in the Equatorial forests, outside the areas known to be populated by man.

THE BIG HAIRY 'APE MEN'.

Large hominoids are reported from different places, like Kenya ('Nanauner'), or Zaire ('Kikomba'). They look like very pilous and muscular men. They have long hair which sometimes hides their faces. The main difference between them and human beings is that they have no forehead at all. They are said to walk with an erect bipedal gait, and sometimes they will hold a stick in one hand. They are said to be aggressive. The best identification that we can suggest would surely be *Homo erectus* or *Pithecanthropus*, rather than one of the more robust *Australopithecines* such as Louis Leakey's 'Zinj'. These appear, in the light of modern research to have been tree dwellers, which would make them hardly distinguishable, to the casual eye witness at least, from a normal Chimpanzee. Although *Pithecanthropus* ('Ape-Man'), as described by Eugene DUBOIS in 1894, is not the best piece of nomenclature for a wild, hairy, man, who really has nothing to do with the apes, it should ideally replace the generic name *Homo* which should be reserved for the round skulled humans of the *sapiens* type. I would therefore identify the larger unrecognised hominoids of Africa with surviving forms of *Pithecanthropus erectus*, originally a savannah form, who has recently taken refuge in the rain or mountain forest, which is usually inaccessible for men. The survival of living specimens the *pithecanthropus* into the present day would not be so surprising. 'Young' fossil remains are attributed to this species; the famous fossil of the '*Rhodesian Man of Broken Hill*' is considered to be no more than 13, 000 years old! The descriptions of the large hominoids of Africa correspond well with the way that we suspect that *Pithecanthropus* lived and behaved. The only difference being that the fossils do not show the typical long hair reported from the living specimens, because hair does not have the ability to form fossils!

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"The Descent of Man" by Francois de Sarre.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CRYPTOZOOLOGICAL AND ZOOMYTHOLOGICAL BOOKS

by Dr Karl P.N.Shuker and Stephen Shipp.

PART ONE

(EDITORIAL NOTE: This was originally intended to be run as a single article, but I should have known better than to ask a well known book dealer to collaborate with the country's foremost Cryptozoologist and a notorious bibliophile, to boot, and expect a result of anything less than astronomical proportions. The article will now be run as a series over the next four or five issues)

For the most part this list is self explanatory, but the following comments assist in defining its precise form and scope.

Works included generally have a minimum length of 32 pages, and concentrate upon cryptozoology (undiscovered animals) and/or zoomythology (mythological animals). Space limitations preclude inclusion of the countless 'general mysteries' books in existence that contain chapters or sections dealing with cryptozoological subjects. Equally, no attempt has been made to provide a complete listing of cryptozoological books, as this would be little short of impossible, especially in relation to foreign language publications. Books clearly written specifically for children are not included.

First UK edition (generally hardback), and most recent UK edition are given for each book. Details of English Language editions published outside the UK are given only in certain instances when these predate their UK counterparts. Last but not least: Books have been deemed eligible for inclusion in this bibliography by virtue of their subject; we have made no attempt to select or discriminate upon the basis of their scientific merit. We leave that perilous task, gentle reader, to you!

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KING KELLAS?

by Tom Anderson (Scottish Correspondent).

Mr and Mrs Jaffrey, accompanied by their grand-children, were driving up a rutted farm track in Strathdon, Aberdeenshire at a sedate five miles an hour. Six metres in front of them, a large black cat crossed the track. They stopped. It was five feet from muzzle to tail, (which was two feet long), and covered in 1.5/2" long fur. Estimated height was two foot plus. After crossing the track it drew alongside the car and surveyed the occupants before moving on. The legs were described as 'stuck on the corners', and too slender for the torso. So sure was the witness that she had encountered a laboratory escapee that she contacted the university. They vehemently denied any 'gene juggling', on cats at least; we know of trials involving goats and llamas. Relatives of the witness saw an identical, (but tawny) cat carrying a rabbit on a shingle beach at Slains, just north of Aberdeen. Slains Castle, of course, was the inspiration for Stoker's castle Dracula - how Fortean can you get?

Friends of Mrs Jaffrey, who own land at Strathdon, have seen the melanistic cat cross a field of cows with calves at foot. The cows total lack of interest in its presence shows at least one generation of familiarity. Although definitely feline, the nearest comparison this (and other witnesses) can make is 'lurcher-like'. The same animal, in two colours, has been seen on the northeast coast, highlands and Tayside in Scotland. The distances confirm three colonies at least, of an animal more gracile than the normal puma type. You will not be surprised to learn that Mrs Jaffrey 'usually kept a camera in the glove-box but for some reason it wasn't there when she needed it'. I would add that the above is an 'expert witness' and has a familiarity with foxes and wildcats that would shame some naturalists.

Editorial Note: A few weeks after we received the above article from Tom Anderson we received another letter from him....

"As a postscript to last month's interview with Mrs Jaffrey and her very detailed description of a cat in Strathdon, it would seem obvious what she and her relatives had seen on both occasions. Her description could only describe one animal (apart from the five foot long, two foot high) part. The next day I sent her a set of photos of what I thought she'd seen along with some background to fill in the details. Twenty four hours later she telephoned to say that this was exactly what she had seen. They were, of course, photographs of the Kellas Cat, and not being set against a scale for comparison, she had no way of knowing that they showed a cat at least fifty percent smaller than hers. We now have three 'King Kellas' sightings in a triangle measuring sixty miles each side. I don't know about you but I can't see a wildcat being the progenitor of this.

Yours confusedly,

Tom".

THE LAST WORD ON THE 'BEAST OF BALA'.

Dear Mr Downes,

...two points of interest - The black and white Ruffed Lemur mentioned on page 10 of 'A&M No 5' came from a private collection near Lake Bala owned by a Pete Drummond and his wife Sue. They take in all sorts of waifs, strays and unwanted zoo specimens. I have not visited the collection myself but 'believe' the stock to be well cared for. How the lemur escaped and how long it was out is unknown to me.

Secondly, the shark attack mentioned on page 11 states that California's last attack was in 1989. Well, I visited San Diego in April 1994 and there had recently been a fatal shark attack. This was even mentioned in Fortean Times a few months ago because the victim had only just beaten Leukaemia.

Keep up the good work.

Alan Pringle,
Welsh Mountain Zoo
Clwyd.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HEADLINE TO PRINT HERE...

Hello again Jonathan,

...I assume most people in England are acquainted with Alice In Wonderland:

A CRYPTO CAROL

Dear Father, I must go, so long
I'm big and Alicen do I belong?
I hope you will understand
I must find my wonderland,
against you no malice
like my sister Alice.

Dear kitten, John, avoid the Lewis gun,
be elusive, run, please dodge son,
hunting rabbits, a lot, in the grass,
you can be shot, through the looking glass,
lay low for a while.
Go to Cheshire, smile.

Eric Sorensen,
Copenhagen.

EDITORIAL

The Editor welcomes letters on any subject of interest for publication. In the interests of space, letters are sometimes edited. The Editor would also like to stress that on these pages, as in the magazine as a whole, opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, the editorial team or the magazine, but are those specifically of the author or correspondent. In the interests of free speech, and a frank exchange of views and information opinions will not be censored unless, in the editors view, by printing them we would be laying ourselves open to legal action

MESSAGE

A CALEDONIAN COLLECTION

(excerpts from letter dated 5th May)

.... Update on shark specimen found in Millburies Loch in Elgin. A somewhat disgusted assistant curator told me that it was only a jawbone, fairly modern, and totally un-foresan.

Re the ever increasing volume of tosh being printed about Loch Ness. Nobody has yet mentioned the Cambell factor. Water Bailiff, local stringer for a national paper, he was extremely superstitious, his mother supposedly having second sight. Singlehanded he revived interest in the story due to his interview being shown widely in North America. This lead to a vast influx of tourists going north where they had previously stopped at Edinburgh. As a leading citizen of Inverness put it 'Forget Columba, its Alec Cambell who should have been beatified'.

As you say this one will run and run. I await in dread the first mention of that other great beast of Inverness-shire A Crowley esq.

As recently as fifteen years ago an elderly relative of my wife, married to a shepherd in Glen Calvie in Easter Ross told me of 'things' being seen at his house, Boleskine. 1995 it may be but the old ways are still deeply held in northern Scotland. Anyone reading Dinsdale, Holliday etc might be better occupied with Muerger!

I shall end with a cautionary tale of free enterprise.

The Macallan-Glenlivet distillery at Craigellachie draws part of its water supply from an open concrete tank built into a cliff. As it started to get choked by grass, Chinese carp were introduced to clear it. This worked a treat. The carp grew extremely large and bred furiously.

The sale of the fish turned into a profitable sideline for the lads until an otter scoffed all the carp and terminated the Christmas Fund!

Regards,

Tom Anderson,
Aberdeen.

ERRATA

To 'Witness Identification in Big Cat sightings' by Jan Kingshott. (A&M5)

Following from the paragraph which says... "Having said this, so called 'experts' from local zoos and wildlife parks continue to categorically affirm that the large melanistic cat seen on Bodmin Moor last year was a 'female black puma'..."
The following paragraph should be inserted.

"Such experts should obviously have a valid opinion due to their experience in the field. If big cat experts cannot recognise a certain species of cat then who could? Therefore, although the prospect of a black puma being the identity for the black cats is unlikely due to the rarity of such an entity, it is still a possible solution. However, when considering witnesses who are not experts in their fields, the prospect for error, whether intentional or not, has far more relevance. Therefore, the manner in which a witness is questioned can have important bearing on the versions of events and descriptions of the animals he provides".

THE BRITISH NANDI BEAR?

by C.H.Keeling

(Editors Note: Clinton Keeling is a renowned and respected zoologist, ex-zookeeper and zoo historian who has written a bewildering number of books on animals. Recently he wrote me a long letter from which, with his permission, I have taken the following extracts).

Regarding the Nandi Bears that I believe may have been in confinement in this country, I don't think that I can do better here than quote direct from my books in which I've mentioned them. The first is from 'Where the Crane danced'.

"...The first one that I have been able to learn anything about must have been operating about the 1730's, and although not even its name has been recorded I was absolutely thrilled to discover that it contained what might well have been proof that an animal that most people relegate to the Loch Ness Monster bin really did exist - and comparatively recently too! In a nutshell, I have always been interested in the mysterious creature usually referred to as the Nandi Bear, which might still exist on the Uasin Gishu plateau in Kenya; some people swear it was/is a belated Chalicotherium, a primitive ungulate with claw-like hooves which officially became extinct long ago, while others pooh-pooh the whole tale as an utter fabrication.

Those who claim to have seen it, though, and they are many, all talk of a Hyena like creature with the head of a bear, (and please note that this menagerie which might have shown one was operating, getting on for two centuries before Kenya was opened up by Europeans, so in other words no-one had ever heard of it then!) I first came upon this intriguing possibility when looking through some old numbers of 'Animal and Zoo Magazine', the long defunct publication I mentioned in 'Where the Lion Trod'. In the edition for February 1938 it stated that a reader in Yorkshire had found a bill 'two hundred years old', that read:

"Posted at the sign of the Spread Eagle, Halifax. This is to give notice to all Gentlemen, Ladies and others, that there is to be seen at the sign of the Coffee House, a curious collection of living wild creatures". It then went on to list its attractions, chiefly monkeys and smallish carnivores, the last of which was: "A young Half and Half; the head like a Hyena, the hind part like a Frieseland (Polar?) Bear"

Now it would certainly not have been either a Hyena or a Bear, as clearly, whoever penned the advertisement apparently knew what they looked like, so one is left to ponder on this curiosity, which sounds so much like that weird threshold-of-science creature which has so often been seen by sober people of high reputation as it has gone slinking through the long grass of the African night".

This was written in 1985. In my book 'Where the Macaw Preened' (1993) I write about Mander's travelling Menagerie, a very well known outfit that closed down in 1872. Again I quote direct; this was in 1869 - and don't take too much notice of what appear to be Nandi Bears from North America, as Mr Mander refers to his Jaguars as hailing from India, and the Anaconda from North America, so clearly

geography was not his forte:

"...listed as *'Indian Prairie Fiends'*, they were described as *'most wonderful creatures. Head like the Hippopotamus, Body like the Bear, Claws similar to the Tiger, and ears similar to the horse'*. That's all, and forget the inference to North America, as there's nothing in that part of the world that has ever resembled anything like this, but, descriptions given by Africans apart, this is the best word-picture of the Chimiset or Nandi Bear I've ever happened upon.

Many people, I know, relegate this astonishing creature to the same category as the Loch Ness Monster and other twilight beasts which might or might not exist, but here I feel they are being unjust as the question really should be *'does it still exist?'*, as of all the mystery animals this is the one that the scientific sceptics come closest to accepting, as paleontologists have learned a great deal about the *Chalicotherium* - which is believed to be the origin of the Nandi Bear. In short, it resembled a nightmarish (no pun intended) horse - in fact it was related to the Equines - which had huge claws and preyed on other animals, in fact many Africans have stated how fierce it is, and how destructive to their livestock. ('Fiends', I trust you've noticed; the only implication so far of its viciousness - again, it fits...). Readers of *'Where the Crane Danced'* will recall my suggestion that a menagerie touring Northern England in the 1730's also boasted a small specimen - which is perfectly possible, as there now seems little doubt that a small relict population of *Chalicotheria* hung out on the Uashin Gishu Plateau in East Africa until the very end of the 19th Century, when it was wiped out by the great Rinderpest epidemic of 1899. Remember, it was an ungulate, despite not having hooves and eating flesh. What a pity Mr Mander didn't think that anyone would be interested to learn what he fed his specimens on!"

One thing that sticks out a mile - and I'm the first to admit it - is that the 1730 and 1869 animals are of completely different species, but in itself this brings up an interesting and significant point. The 1730 animal is a perfect description of so many sightings in the field - all mention the Bear-like head, hence the popular name. More recently, reconstructions of the *Chalicotherium* depict a very horse-like creature - and here the Hippo-like head ties up. In other words, incredible as it might sound, both descriptions 'fit', although I must emphasise that the former description is via genuine eyewitnesses, while the latter is probably the creation of abstruse theorists and armchair naturalists. To me, though, it's highly significant that Mander had an animal he could identify, as this is the only species in his collection with an outlandish - indeed made-up name bestowed on it. He was a very experienced animal keeper who described everything else he had under its proper name, so clearly this was something 'new' and distinctly out of the ordinary.



PICTURE BY LISA PEACH

The A - Z of Cryptozoology. Part 5

after a brief hiatus Jan Williams is back....and this time it's personal!

CABYLL-UISGE: 'Water-horse' of the Isle of Man

CADBOROSAURUS (CADDY): Sea-monster reported around Vancouver Island (British Columbia, Canada) since the 19th Century. Descriptions refer to a creature up to 18 metres long, with a head resembling that of a horse or camel, large cow-like eyes, and a body which shows coils as it swims. Variations include horns or a mane. Caddy was seen to rear its head out of the water and gulp down a duck in 1933, and appeared on shore at Saanich Inlet in 1991.

A 1995 paper by E.Y.Bousfield and Paul leBlond described the creature and gave it the latin name of *Cadborosaurus willsi*.

CAIT SITH: Fairy cat of Scottish Highland legend, described as dog-sized, black with a white spot on its breast, an arched back and erect bristles, and 'sparks' over its fur.

CAMAHUETO: Chilean 'water horse' said to be born in fresh water and migrate to the sea.

CAMOODI: Legendary giant snake of Guyana.

CHALLICUM BUNYIP: Beast said to have been speared to death on the banks of Fiery Creek, Victoria (Australia). Its 9-metre-long outline was traced on the turf, and for many years Aborigines returned to the spot annually to re-trace it. Eventually the site became neglected, and all that now remains is a sketch drawn in 1867.

CHAMP: Monster of Lake Champlain (New York State, U.S.A.) which has given rise to a surprising variety of descriptions, though vertical humps and a long neck, as portrayed in the famous 1977 Sandra Mansi photo, are frequent features. An 1899 on-shore sighting described the creature as dark laterally and paler ventrally. The belief that Champ was first recorded by Samuel de Champlain in 1609 appears to be based on misinterpretation of the explorer's description of a garfish.

The creature has even been videotaped. One peice of video purporting to show the creature was broadcast on BBC TV's childrens show 'Blue Peter' in 1993 or 1994, but is a very wobbly and unsatisfactory piece of footage of an indistinct blob in the middle distance.

CHESSIE: Sea-monster of Chesapeake Bay (Maryland/Virginia, USA). One of four seen together at the mouth of the Potomac River in 1978 was 25-30 feet long, dark grey, and swimming with an undulating motion.

HELP

Animals & Men' subscriber, Neil Arnold from Kent writes..

THE SECTION WHERE
READERS AND
EDITORS ALIKE
APPEAL FOR HELP
WITH THEIR
RESEARCHES

BIGFOOT VIDEOS

When I was about ten years old my parents used to get films out from the local video hire shop. At the time I was always watching films that I'd got from relatives or from shops. At the time I remember seeing all the Arthur C Clarke programmes (now showing on Sky TV's 'Discovery' Channel) and from that age I had a big interest in lake monsters and 'Bigfoot' especially. My problem stems from my Sasquatch interest because all those years ago I remember

seeing a couple of docu-type movies concerning the animal. These films were called 'Boggy Creek', 'Return to Boggy Creek', 'Barbaric Beast of Boggy Creek' and 'Legend of Boggy Creek'. The films mixed fact, and possibly a little fiction but have stuck in my memory since then. The films have now disappeared because films get withdrawn when they become old but I am desperate to get hold of them. The films emerged in the '70s and finished around 1985. A man named Charles B. Pierce directed some of them but to this day my attempts to find these films have been unsuccessful. I'm not sure who distributed them, (the first film was on the 'Iver Film Services' label), but I was hoping that some avid collector of Bigfoot memorabilia may have them. They were out to rent but I don't know where I saw them. I still remember a few scenes from one of the films but I just want my endless search to end by getting hold of a copy or original version of one of these movies. If anyone can help, write to: Neil at 8 Gorse Avenue, Weedswood Estate, Chatham, Kent, England. ME5 0UQ.

Neil continues:

On a final note you write in issue five that you were looking for pub signs with a cryptozoological theme and also comic books. There are many pubs in Kent with 'dragon' in the title but the only interesting one was 'The Unicorn Inn' at Marsden, Maidstone. Unfortunately the pub is still open so getting the pub sign would be theft!! There is another pub called 'The Flying Saucer' which is interesting but nothing any more cryptozoological has caught my eye in Kent.

As for comic books and comic strips, I do have a strip in a horror comic which depicts the sasquatch as a rather psychotic beast. The comic is American and called 'Gore Shriek'. However it is a pretty gory strip that basically turns the beast into a child killing loony! The strip is untitled and without words, it is total bloodshed. Crypto comics don't seem to be an easy thing to come by. Have you thought about doing a crypto film article? That would be interesting because a lot of films concerning 'Bigfoot', 'Nessie' etc have been released and these movies have emerged within the comedy genre as well as the rather more obvious science fiction and horror genres. If you do intend to find out more about cryptozoological themes in films I have a list of films which may be of interest to you so let me know if you would like to see it. I'm sure that others will write in and speak of films concerning lake monsters etc. It would be great to see what everybody comes up with. You'll be surprised.

OK Neil. That is a great idea. Readers of 'Animals & Men', you have now been mobilised into action!

BOOK AND VIDEO REVIEWS

'BIGFOOT' (LABYRINTH VIDEO) 50 MINS£10.99

Having unleashed a wave of UFO product, Labyrinth Video have now set about Fortean in general and 'Bigfoot' is their first cryptozoological title. For your money you get just under an hour of Bigfoot's greatest hits. Appearances from Peter Byrne and some shots of him and his research team in action, the Patterson film and the more contentious Daryl Owen video from the nineties. Experts and witnesses make appearances with Grover Krantz taking the bulk of the explaining duties. The video is culled from the American series 'Ancient Mysteries', and shows some evidence of being well financed and aimed at the popular end of the market. The action moves swiftly between American states with a Bigfoot tradition and the argument generally support the 'Bigfoot is Real/Scientists are narrow minded' camp. We do get a token redskin mystic arguing the ability of Bigfoot to dematerialise at will. 'Bigfoot', more entertaining than a wet night on Exmoor with a bag of mutton and a camera. NEIL NIXON

'SOMETHING LOST BEHIND THE RANGES' by John Blashford-Snell (Harper-Collins pb 374pp £7.99)

This is the second volume of autobiography from a great Englishman. It is one of the greatest sorrows for all of us who were born since 1950 that we are the first generation who have not been able to open an atlas and see tantalising white patches marked 'Unexplored'. John Blashford-Snell is one of the few great explorers of the second part of the 20th Century, and he is also, almost coincidentally a great story teller, although I am sure that it helps that he has a great story to tell. For the cryptozoologist this book is full of fascinating snippets, barely explored-the description of big cat noises in the Ethiopian night evoke Karl Shuker's description of 'Wobo' and 'Abu Sotan', the mysterious Ethiopian Big Cats, and the graphic descriptions of hunts for the yeti, the humped elephants of Nepal and the mysterious Artrellia of Papua New Guinea are gripping stuff. This book is most important, however as an appealing reminder that the world is still not as civilised as we imagine it to be, and that there are still new worlds to conquer. I sat up in bed reading this book late one night, until my wife made me put it down. Apparently, whilst reading, and without realising it, I was humming the theme tune from 'Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom', so loudly that she couldn't get to sleep!

'OUT OF CONTROL-The New Biology of Machines' by KEVIN KELLY (4th Estate. 666pp. £8.99).

If you are only going to buy one book this summer make sure it is this one! This is quite possibly the most important book that I have read in many years. It explores the parallel vivisystems of computer networks, natural ecosystems and global economics, by way of a brief trawl through virtual reality, the mathematics of gambling, genetics and evolution, and the development of software for computer games. We are on the verge of a revolution in the Biological Sciences, similar to that which has happened in recent years within mathematics. This book is a distillation of the ideas which are going to formulate that revolution, and cannot be ignored.

PERIODICAL REVIEWS

We welcome an exchange of periodicals with magazines of mutual interest although because we now exchange with so many magazines we have been forced, much against our fortune methodology, to categorise them. For reasons of space we only include those magazines which we have heard from during the previous three months.

CRYPTOZOOLOGY AND ZOOMYTHOLOGY

DRAGON CHRONICLE, The Dragon trust, PO Box 3369, London SW6 6JN. A fascinating collection of all things draconian which now appears four times a year. Now A4 and Glossy...how do they DO it?

NESSLETTER Rip Hepple, 7 Huntshildford, St Johns Chapel, Bishop Auckland Co Durham DL13 1RQ. This magazine has been appearing regularly for many years and cannot be recommended highly enough. Thanks for the advertising mate!

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CRYPTOZOOLOGY CLUB NEWSLETTER, 3773 West 18th Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. V6S 1B3. Excellent and well put together, and they are now on the Internet as well!

CREATURE RESEARCH JOURNAL, Paul Johnson, 721 Old Greensburg Pike, North Versailles, PA 15137-1111 USA. A fascinating periodical about the correlation between mystery animals and UFO reports.

BIPEDIA, Francois de Sarre, CERBI, BP65, 06202, NICE, CEDEX 3, FRANCE. A magazine about Initial Bipedalism, scholarly and concise.

CRYPTOZOOLOGIA, Association Belge d'Etude et de Protection des Animaux Rares, Square des Latins 49/4, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium. A French language magazine published by the Belgian society for Cryptozoology.

FRINGE SCIENCE

NEXUS 55 Queens Rd, E. Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1BG. Intelligent look at the fringes of science. Well put together. Very impressive.

FORTEAN AND ALLIED

DEAD OF NIGHT, 156 Bolton Road East, Newferry, Wirral, Merseyside, L62 4RY. An amusing and intelligently put together Fortean magazine. Issue four has an article on 'black dogs' and a long round up of absurd items of fortetan zoology. One of my favourite magazines. A issue five has a Loch Ness special.

ENIGMAS, 41 The Braes, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, Scotland, FK10 2TT A Fine 'mysteries' magazine with a UFO bias. An article by me on animal mutilation will be appearing eventually!

PROMISES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS 42 Victoria Road, Mt Charles, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4Qd England. Kevin McClure is the editor of this excellent magazine on 'non human intelligence'. Issue two features an article by me drawing parallels between alien abduction scenarios and the west country folklore of being 'pixy lead'.

DELVE Gene Duplantier, 17 Shetland St, Willowdale, Ontario. CANADA M2M 1X5 An engaging collection of odds and sods of fortetana and UFO reports.

TOUCHSTONE, Jimmy Goddard, 25 Albert Rd, Addlestone, Surrey. KT15 2PX. Well written and concise UFO mag. Recommended very highly.

ANNALS 2, G Lovell, 8 St John St, Wells, Somerset, BA5 1SW. Fine Fortean mag...UFO abductions, Roswell, Near death experiences etc. Very good. Why we did not encounter this magazine earlier I don't know.

EARTH MYSTERIES

TEMS NEWS, 115 Hollybush Lane, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 2QY. An engaging collection of quasi fortein odds and ends from veteran UFO buff Lionel Beer, who described your beloved editor recently as 'the big man with the big hat!'. Revenge will be sweet earthing ha ha ha ha ha!!

THIRD STONE PO BOX 258, Cheltenham, Glos, GL53 0HR. The magazine of the Gloucester Earth Mysteries group. A wonderful, witty and stylish look at earth mysteries in general and Gloucestershire ones in particular. Latest issue includes Lynn Picknett on the Turin Shroud. Anyone who names their magazine after a Hendrix record is OK by me. After all this one is named after a song by Adam and the Ants!

PENDRAGON Fred Steadman-Jones, Smithy House, Newton by Frodsham, Cheshire, WA6 SAX. An Arthurian journal Par Excellence. Scholarly, but also witty and manages to avoid new age drivel entirely. I cannot praise this magazine highly enough.

ZOOLOGY/NATURAL HISTORY

THE REPTILIAN, Mantella Publishing, 22 Firs Close, Hazlemere, High Wycombe, Bucks HP15 7TF. Excellent full colour magazine aimed at the reptile enthusiast and keeper. Well written and entertaining. I cannot praise this magazine highly enough.

KINGSBRIDGE AND DISTRICT NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, Mr Ian Nicholas, Mèrons Reach, West Charlton, South Devon. Not really a magazine although they publish newsheets. A very impressive organisation. Involved in several research projects including 'Wildlife Identification and Recording Project'. Organisations like this need OUR support!

SOUTH WEST HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER, Frank Gibbons, Acanthus, 59 St Marychurch Rd, Torquay, Devon. Entertaining and informative newsletter from a thriving organisation. Contains some quasi fortein oddments.

THE SOUTH AND WEST TARANTULA SOCIETY, 16 Woolavington Hill, Woolavington, Bridgewater, Somerset. Informative and educational. A very useful little organisation.

PORTSMOUTH REPTILE AND AMPHIBIAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER M Jones, 7 Hazelmere Rd, Southsea, Hants. Another thriving regional organisation whose publications ooze with authoritativeness and professionalism.

MILTON KEYNES HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY 15 Esk Way, Bleckley, Milton Keynes. Excellent A5 magazine containing handy hints, informative articles and news of what appears to be an exciting organisation.

MAINLY ABOUT ANIMALS, 13 Pound Place, Shalford, Guildford, Surrey GU4 8HH. Veteran Zoologist Clinton Keeling edits this wonderful A5 magazine which is, as the title says, mainly about animals. This is a genre of magazine that I and many others feared was lost forever and it comes with your editor's highest recommendation.

We also exchange with 'The Cerealogist', 'The Bigfoot Record', and 'Track Record but we have not received anything from them during the past three months!

WHAT'S YOUR GROUSE?

NERVOUS TWITCH

Conservation efforts in Scotland appear to have slowed down the decline of the Capercaillie, which is the largest member of the grouse family. A successful breeding season in the Abernathy nature reserve has helped numbers considerably. One strange effect leading from this happened when a young couple were recently attacked by an adult male trying to assert his dominance. Because all the females were claimed in his area the male had become quite aggressive. As the adult males weigh around 30lbs and have a beak that can snap twigs the RSPB are advising people who are approached by one of these birds to run! *Aberdeen Press & Journal* 9.5.95

Avian oddness from the nervous twitcher.

PINK FLAMINGOES

More amorous tales-Flamingoes at Slimbridge Wildlife Trust are being encouraged to breed by mirrors! The birds are happier in large crowds and so the mirrors are being used to create this illusion. They last produced a chick at the centre, in 1977. *ITV Teletext News* 13.3.95

IS IT A BIRD? IS IT A PLANE?

In Eastbourne a 'superduck' has been laying strange eggs. They are twice as large as normal and when opened they are found to contain another egg complete with shell. The large eggs weigh over seven ounces and are eight inches long. The owner, Mrs Frances King discovered it when her friend tried to hard-boil one! *Eastbourne Gazette* 18.1.95.

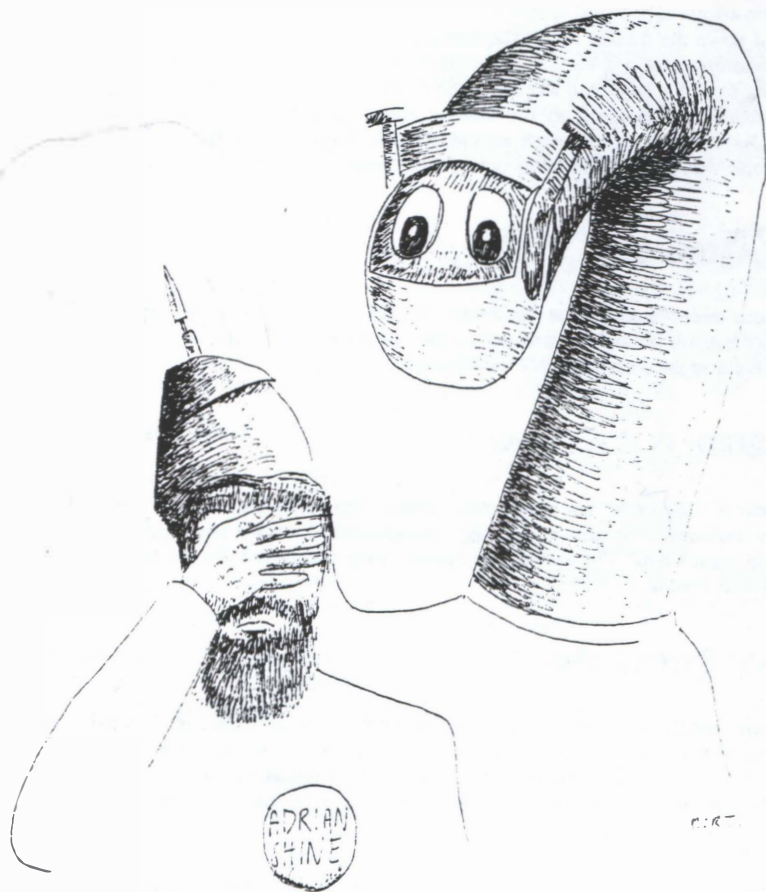
THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

An American Bald Eagle has flown off from a Falconry Centre in North East England. 'Cochise' vanished after a flying demonstration. He was last seen flying over a hill and no-one has seen him since. He has a pure white head and tail, a chocolate-brown body and a wingspan of over seven feet. A sea Eagle also disappeared from the same centre in December 1994 but returned a fortnight later. *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 31.5.95.

WOODY HAS A LOT TO ANSWER FOR

Woodpeckers have been causing problems lately. to, of all things, the NASA Space Programme. They have hammered 71 holes in the insulating foam of the Space Shuttle Discovery. The foam which prevents ice forming will have to be replaced. *Daily Mail* 2.6.95. The saga of the woodpeckers and the Space Programme was continuing as we went to press with a number of mildly entertaining preventative measures, including plastic birds of prey to scare off the intruders, being considered. Watch this 'SPACE'...

CARTOON BY 'MORT'



GIVE ME STRENGTH! A STURGEON! I SAID
THAT YOU COULD BE A STURGEON!

Typeset by The Artist formerly known as "HEN"
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